

A COLLECTING TRIP TO THE HERBERTON DISTRICT, NORTH QUEENSLAND.

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For several years I had desired to undertake a collecting trip to the Herberton district and the great Evelyn Scrub, but the difficulties and inconveniences of travelling by coach, or other vehicle, over part of the way, with my necessarily large number of boxes and entomological requisites, prevented the carrying out of my desire. However, in January, 1910, I sent my son, who has been assisting me in the field for several years, to examine the country and report upon its possibilities, in consequence of which, and the recent completion of the railway to Herberton, I determined to spend several months in the vicinity of the scrub, some 12 miles south from Herberton. Accordingly, late in November last I left Kuranda, fully prepared for the work, my son preceding me by several weeks.

From Kuranda the line runs south-westerly for about 20 miles, and then turns due south, Atherton (2,466 feet) being reached at 47 miles from Kuranda. The line continues south for several miles further before the foot of the Herberton Range is reached. As the train ascends the granite hills, a pretty view opens out across a wide and deep valley to the right, some of the hills opposite being densely clothed with scrub. At the bottom of the valley the old coach road may be perceived. The hills, up which the train slowly climbs, are fairly thickly covered with tall forest trees, generally Stringy and Iron-barks, Bloodwood, and Scented Gum, *Eucalyptus citriodora*. A cascade waterfall, known as the Carrington Falls, is passed close by the line on the left, one tunnel is negotiated, and soon after we are on top of the range, perhaps not quite 4,000 feet anywhere, then a downward run of a few miles brings us to Herberton (2,800 feet), 13 miles from Atherton. The township is spread along the slopes of the hills, with the here unimposing Wild River cutting it in two, the greater and business portion being on the eastern side. The river, a little further down, after junctioning with several important water-courses, becomes the Herbert, which drains all the country about here. A mile or two westward across the hills the waters run to tributaries of the great Mitchell River, flowing to the Gulf of Carpentaria, which must become a mighty stream during the phenomenal rainfalls of the North Queensland wet season.

I had left Kuranda at 9 a.m., and arrived at Herberton at 1.40. The day was hot, but pleasant to a dweller of the lower districts. Though wearing a warm tweed suit, I experienced

not the least discomfort. Often, when hearing Herberton or Evelyn residents complain of the heat, I would wonder how they would relish living in Cairns or Townsville, if suddenly transported there. One can quickly get used to any warm climate if much out of doors. I dwelt for years at Townsville, and preferred the summer to the cool season; the same at Kuranda, where I have resided for the past seven years, less a year at Port Darwin.

About 4 o'clock in the afternoon I started for the Evelyn Scrub in a buggy drawn by two smart ponies, driven by Mrs. Hull, who has a knowledge of horses and driving any man could well be proud of. After passing along and down a ridge, we crossed Nigger Creek, two miles out, over which the railway passes on its way to the scrub lands, but is not yet open for traffic. Beyond, for several miles, the large and tall trees showed we were passing through good agricultural country. Leaving this, we commenced to ascend a range of hills—avoided by the railway—one of which, with a precipitous face, is known as "The Bluff," and is discernible for some distance. In places mountain vegetation became apparent, such as stunted trees of Bloodwood, Ironbark, fibrous-barked Casuarina, Tea-tree (not Melaleuca), and heathy shrubs, a dwarf Acacia, leguminous and other plants, and a few flowers. In some places *Tristania conferta* becomes a shrub, and forms almost impenetrable thickets, acres in extent. Some of the flowering shrubs, such as Hovea, I have seen near Brisbane; others, again, in the vicinity of Stawell, Victoria, taking me back to days of long ago—rabbit-hunting, cranberry-picking, and wild-flower gathering. The love of natural history had not taken strong hold of me in those early days (though I knew the bush and the birds well), which I regret, for the Stawell district is both pretty and interesting, with great variety of trees and shrubs, and doubtless producing many species of insects.

The highest point our road passed over was scarcely 3,600 feet, the "Bluff" probably being 250 feet higher. We took measurements by aneroid later of road and other hills, but not of "The Bluff." Descending the hills, and crossing Mill Creek, which possesses several fair waterfalls, and is the same upon which Mrs. Hull lives higher up, our road for over a mile took an easterly trend to her selection, known as "Cressbrook," still close to the hills, where I had arranged to stay, the scrubs being adjacent. Another road from Herberton runs much more to the left, until it touches the scrub, finally junctioning with the southern one I had travelled by, and, entering the scrub, becomes the Geraldton road, which, lower down the range, can only be negotiated on foot. For the last mile or so of

our journey the country was well timbered with tall White Gums, *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, Bloodwoods, *E. corymbosa*, and two species of *Casuarina*, one having long, slender, drooping branches. This and the small mountain species was new to me.

"Cressbrook" is a dairy, worked by Mrs. Hull and several grown-up daughters—young women stout and strong, equally at home in the saddle or house, and quite unconcerned if out in pelting rain all day long. Mill Creek, which runs close to the house, is an ever-flowing and watercress-fringed stream of cool and pure water—except in times of heavy rain. Here my son and I spent three very busy months. To be exact, our location was about forty-five miles due west of Mourilyan Harbour, but with many impenetrable ranges between.

All new localities have an extraordinary charm for the naturalist. At first, as the many new species came to light, our interest was unbounded; but as time wore on, and nothing unusually remarkable was discovered, we experienced a slight feeling of disappointment. Were it not that we collected specimens of most of the orders, more particularly of Lepidoptera, our trip would have been a somewhat unsatisfactory one. However, we specially desired Micro-lepidoptera, and of these were successful in making a very fine collection. Perhaps I had better refer to each order separately, touching briefly upon the larger or more curious species collected or noted.

When I arrived the country was brown and dry, the coastal rains of the early summer not having extended to the district, though several drizzly periods had kept the scrub damp. These drizzles favour the growth of moss on nearly all the scrub trees: even on quite small ones great bunches of moss, a foot in length, or as large as a dinner plate, may often be seen hanging on twigs no thicker than a lead pencil. One of these bunches, 15 inches by 10, I brought away with me.

Thunderstorms had floated past us on both sides for some time—the direction generally from the west—until we were favoured with a good shower; then, early in January, our first continuous rain, of three or four days, set in, and a little later it was too frequent to be pleasant. The thunderstorms here are more dangerous than near the coast (or at Port Darwin, where they are of almost daily occurrence for four months, and frequently are extremely violent), and we often heard of trees that had been struck by lightning. My son came across one where the lightning, after tearing off a topmost branch, ran down the trunk, causing a groove half an inch deep and a little wider, and stripping away the bark on each side of the groove, the strip of bark removed having a regular width

of about 7 inches all the way down. This tree died. We brought away a section showing the electric track through the bark and wood, and another from a larger tree with a wider lightning groove in the wood, the tree having been killed at least a year before. Mrs. Hull and daughters told me of a hollow tree near Evelyn cattle station, a few miles away, where lightning had entered above and burst splintery holes through the trunk in several places. Close by Mr. Stone's residence, in the scrub, a large tree was shattered by lightning, which continued along a large horizontal root, tearing a trench in the ground for some yards.

The climate is a mild, pleasant, and extremely healthy one—maybe at times too chilly for some, for in winter the temperature is often much below freezing-point, and frost and ice are common. Ice has no attractions for a coastal man—unless in a summer drink.

Nearly all the fruits, vegetables, and flowers of the south thrive in the district. Anywhere peaches and dahlias do splendidly. An old, neglected orchard at "Cressbrook" contained fairly well-laden apple, peach, plum, and pear trees; strawberries and grapes also take kindly to the district. In the flower garden there were petunias, marigolds, violets, dahlias, stocks, honeysuckle, &c. Citrus trees, too, were present, but the winter is, at times, somewhat severe for them. In the scrub, at Mr. Stone's residence, a pale heliotrope plant deserves notice; it was fastened on to the side of the house, and was about 11 feet high, and as wide, with a depth of about 3 feet. It was loaded with blossoms, and doubtless could have been trained much higher; but, reaching the spouting, it was kept clipped there.

Always living in the coastal districts, I have never seen a plague of caterpillars, but I was informed of one which occurred in the district a few years ago. The insects came along in a rolling, tumbling mass, and could distinctly be heard advancing. Everything green was attacked. The creatures swarmed into and crawled over the house, fell into and polluted the water in tanks and creek, climbed up the legs of fowls, cows, and other animals, and they and human beings too were depressed and sick for several days from the pollution of the water and a most unpleasant odour that arose from the myriads of crawling things. Strange to say, as has before been noticed in cases such as this, no extraordinary number of moths followed the caterpillar visitation.

In and adjacent to the scrub, the largest and highest trees I have yet seen in Queensland came under my notice. Gigantic White Gums fringe the scrub, and continue a little way along the watercourses which start from it; mighty Kauri Pines,

Damara australis, perhaps 8 feet through and 120 feet high, are plentiful in the scrub; but, not having actually measured them, I must be careful, for, not long ago, wonderful stories were told and published about North Queensland and its scrubs, its wild blacks, fearful storms, wonderful birds, &c.

These notes are absolute facts, and I have no desire to pose as a hero, or marvellous climber, and discoverer of what does not exist. For instance, the remarkable Tooth-billed Bower-bird, which is rarely found below 1,500 feet, has been recorded as an eater of snails, cracking the shells on a stone regularly visited for the purpose. Along with Mr. Sharpe and others, I have examined hundreds of play-grounds of this bird, and have failed to find a shell, or even a fragment, on or near any of them. Nor have we found a stone, or log, or anything else with signs of shells having been cracked thereon. A person may travel through the scrubs, particularly the higher ones, for a whole day at any season of the year and not see a single live snail, because they are by no means plentiful, and, again, they are strictly nocturnal, while the bird is not. Even if one of the birds differed so much from its kindred as to find the snails and crack them on a stone near its play-ground, it would not be likely to again differ and allow the fragments to remain scattered therein, as has been represented in a recent photograph. Neither does the Grey Bower-bird, *Chlamydodera orientalis*, ornament the inside of its bower with pieces of coloured glass. Those pieces which were reported to have been seen artistically arranged amongst the erect twigs had doubtless been placed there by the hands of the school children of the district, who often visited that particular bower, which was close to a township, and, in fact, occupied the site of a hotel of the earlier coaching days. Nor did we observe Cassowaries bumping the trees to shake down their fruits, or come across wondrous vines which covered many acres of scrub, nor even one which covered one acre. Such a vine would be a wonder; but one covering many acres would truly be the marvel of the vegetable kingdom. Those, therefore, who look for marvels in these notes will be disappointed. It is regrettable that the truth is often commonplace and dull, and it seems that there are several persons writing on Australian natural history matters who recognize this, and are enterprising enough to have set themselves to rectify such a state of things. The same writer recorded fearful storms in the Atherton district towards the end of 1908, which produced sudden and alarming floods in the Barron River; but the remarkable feature of the record is that only this one person seems to have seen the havoc wrought by these dreadful storms or the terrible floods. He states that great trees were snapped off in a wholesale manner. My experience of several

cyclones is that the trees are generally torn up by the roots. Fortunately, Atherton was not in the track of these storms, or it would have been swept off the face of the earth. Curiously enough, the officially recorded rainfall for Atherton for October, November, and December, 1908, is 141 points on 10 wet days, 81 points on 7 wet days, and 81 points on 3 wet days respectively, or a total of 3 inches for 20 days' rain spread over three months. Even if the whole three inches had fallen in one day, unless preceded by much heavier rain to saturate the ground and fill up all low-lying places, it would not have affected the Barron to the extent of six inches. Further comment on such reports is needless.

BUTTERFLIES.—Lepidoptera being the principal objects of our search, I will deal with that group first. Butterflies were very disappointing. Within the scrub *Ornithoptera cassandra*, *Papilio joesa*, *Euschemon rafflesia*, *Cethosia cydippe*, and other handsome and well-known species occurred. I was greatly surprised at finding the last-named species at the altitude of 3,500 to 3,600 feet. The pretty and active *Pyrameis itea*, which I had not seen further north than Brisbane, was taken occasionally, both within and without the scrub. The new skipper, named by Lower *Hesperilla malindava*, which my son took last year, proved to be both rare and local, and a dozen examples were all we could secure. The blues (*Lycenidae*) were all of common species, and not numerous. The taking of a male of *Hypolycæna phorbas* probably indicates that the Green Tree-Ant is in the scrubs here, though we did not notice it anywhere.

MOTHS.—Hawk-moths (*Sphingidae*) generally were scarce; however, a freshly-emerged specimen of *Cequesa australasica* was picked off a twig. Several species of *Zeuseridae*, some of them found near Brisbane, were bred out. One of them proved to be new, and has been named *Xyleutes methychroa* by Dr. Turner. Several *Hepialidae* were taken. *Hepialus daphrandra* was as fine as those found near Brisbane. Along the northern coast it is generally small. The males of *H. cyanochlora*, which we had bred at Port Darwin and frequently in North Queensland, were the handsomest I had yet seen. The smaller species, *H. lewinii*, which I had not previously met with in the north, was larger than usual. Several fine species of *Darala* and *Teara* were bred or captured, one fine *Darala* being rather handsome, and new to me; another, *Eupterode doddi*, Turner, varied in a remarkable degree, much more so than the widely distributed *D. acuta*. Some common "procession caterpillars," including *Teara contraria*, were in hundreds just before our departure. The pretty *T. variegata* was often taken at rest on the trunks of *Casuarinas* (its food plant), and young larvæ were noticed in numbers at the end of February. A handsome

new Xyloryctid was bred from the gummy bark of the Scented Gum, *Eucalyptus citriodora*. Micro-lepidoptera were in great force just before the wet weather set in, and I was able to make a fine collection of them.

That common but large and showy day-flying moth, *Nyctlemon orontes*, was in thousands in the hills, and was reported from several localities. At the same time (January and February) it abounded in the Kuranda district, and almost every day since I came home it has been passing over in great numbers. I hope some day to prepare some notes on this interesting moth, which, by non-entomological observers, is generally spoken of as a butterfly. The great flights of butterflies frequently recorded in North Queensland are merely everyday flights of this moth. The following paragraph appeared in the *Cairns Post* of 5th June :—"Picnickers to Second Beach yesterday witnessed a rather pretty sight in the shape of a thick flock of butterflies, which settled on the vegetation along the banks of the creek which runs towards the Gorge. The place was thick with butterflies, which remained there all day. These have been seen in the locality on previous occasions, but never in such numbers as witnessed yesterday." The so-called butterflies were all specimens of *Nyctlemon orontes*. A somewhat similar paragraph was published in April, just after the great rains, but it has been mislaid.

At this time we had just experienced the five days' rain which had had such disastrous effects upon the Cairns railway (Kuranda recorded 85 inches for the five days). After the deluge butterflies were conspicuous by their absence; not so *N. orontes*. It was passing over as freely as ever, doubtless coming from a locality beyond the influence of the cyclone, and the accompanying phenomenal rainfall.

Remarkable butterflies do not occur in great numbers anywhere in the north, and especially in the Atherton district, notwithstanding the report of a southern egg-collector that they were of extraordinary brilliance, and occurred in vast numbers. They cannot compare in numbers with those of an ordinary coastal district in tropical Queensland. No fine species occur there that are not represented on the coast, and the butterflies he saw passing over one day were merely flights of the *Nyctlemon*. Lepidopterists should know this, and oologists should know that nests and eggs are no more plentiful or more difficult to find there than in any other tropical scrub.

COLEOPTERA.—Beetles were by no means plentiful in scrub or forest. Of course, we secured some fine species, but at the expense of much wandering, searching, and a little climbing. What few flowering trees there were were too tall, thin, or straggling to be profitably climbed and worked, and one of

the best beetle trees in the north, the Bloodwood, *Eucalyptus corymbosa*, flowered too late. The magnificent *Phalacrognathus Muelleri*, the pretty *Neolanprina mandibularis*, and the several fine Buprestids and Cetonids we obtained were well worth the hunting and scrambling for. Longicorns were disappointing. A fine streaked Elater and a fair number of Tenebrionidæ were taken, a dozen or so of the latter being strangers to Mr. Carter, who is so interested in this family. Other novelties included a small coppery Carenum, a handsome Pamborus, three Amycteridæ, various Carabidæ, &c.

ODONATA.—Among dragon-flies, a superb specimen of *Petalura gigantea*, the only one seen, and two examples of a large species with brown shaded wings, which Mr. Tillyard informs me is "*Planæschna costalis*, a fine and rare insect," were taken. We sent him about nine or ten species, all of which he states "occur around Sydney, and right down into Victoria, and even Tasmania."

RHYNCHOTA.—Cicadas, leaf-hoppers, and bugs were but poorly represented, nor was anything remarkable noted in any group or family.

DIPTERA.—Flies were in great variety, many being large and handsome. A gigantic Asilid, black, with yellow body, which occurs in the Brisbane district, was captured. At flowering shrubs we took both curious and handsome species, and at over-ripe fruit a short, stalk-eyed species (*Zygotrichia*, sp.?) was netted. At Kuranda there are three species of these queer flies, odd examples of one species having eyes three-fourths of an inch apart.

ORTHOPTERA.—Mantids, locusts, crickets, and cockroaches were few in species and numbers, and of quite ordinary appearance. One of the Locustidæ calls for special mention—perhaps a different species from the southern *Acridopeza reticulata*, for the male is black and the female has not the blue, white, and red tints of this species on her body, but blue and orange. A pink-winged Phasma was taken now and then, and several other medium-sized species were observed. A grey insect, flattened underneath, and splendidly hidden on rough-barked trees, was the best we saw. Two slender, wingless species, one in the scrub and the other in the grass of the forest, were occasionally met with.

HYMENOPTERA.—Wasps and bees were rather scarce, and so were conspicuous Ichneumonidæ, but we took examples of one fine species, a Megalyra, with ovipositor over two inches in length. The ants, too, were fewer in species than nearer the coast. The absence of the Green Tree-Ant, *Ecophylla virescens*, the Mound Ant, *Iridomyrmex purpurea*, and other well-known species was at once noticeable. There was a fine reddish

"bulldog," with black abdomen, and a "jumper," both of the genus *Myrmecia*. That wretched little pest, the Brown House-Ant, so common in Queensland, which infests our gardens and houses, and is such a protector and undoubtedly farmer of scales and aphides, was happily absent—at least, wherever we were—but, like the sparrow, it is bound to spread.

BIRDS.—My son is interested in these, but I gave him little time to observe or collect same. He obtained less than a dozen skins, and found a few clutches of eggs, most of which he did not interfere with. Nests found included Satin Bower-bird, *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*, containing one egg (height from ground, 8 feet), a Scrub Thrush (*Collyriocichla*, sp.), the Ashy-fronted Robin, *Heteromyias cinereifrons*, Yellow-rumped Robin, *Eopsaltria magnirostris*, and a few others. The last-named nests out in the forest, and never by any chance builds in or very close to the scrub. Forest birds do not build in the scrub, nor do the scrub birds build in the forest, therefore when one reads of a Yellow-rumped Robin and a Rifle-bird, *Ptilorhis victoriæ*, nesting in the same tree, strangely at the same time, and within 6 feet of each other, he smiles—very broadly, too! The Yellow-rumped Robin is a dear little bird, and its notes are wonderfully like some of those of the Ashy-fronted. We found it up to 4,000 feet. It is the only yellow-rumped species in the north, but attempts were made (happily upset by North and Mathews) to pass off a variety as a new species. Not only that, but the habitat of the bird was said to be only high country of 3,000 to 5,000 feet—strange, indeed, when we reflect that the highest points in North Queensland, with the exception of the scrub-clad and rarely ascended mountains, Bellenden-Ker and Bartle-Frere, fall short of the greater height by nearly 1,000 feet! This Robin, like some other birds, at times varies a little in colour and size; so do the eggs, which may be found in clutches of two, three, and four. We have seen the bird on a forest patch two miles from Kuranda, at about 1,100 feet, and, out in the open forest, five miles from Kuranda, at about 1,300 feet, it is not rare.

The Tooth-billed Bower-birds', *Scenopæetes denti-rostris*, playgrounds received much attention from us, for we were very interested in the alleged snail-shell cracking (on stones) propensities of the birds, as reported by an individual who paid a hurried visit in 1908 to this fearful Queensland. Of course, we failed to discover any evidence in support of his statements, and knew full well that we should not. It is quite likely this bird often builds fairly high, perhaps 30 to 50 feet, but Mr. Sharp found the first nest and eggs * ever discovered, at only 17 feet, and he informed me that he never found any so high

* *Victorian Naturalist*, February, 1909, xxv., p. 160.

as 80 or 90 feet. Without blacks to help search and to climb for us it was waste of valuable time to attempt to find the nests in these great scrubs, where the timber is loftier than in the Atherton district. Our hands were too full of entomological work. Out from early morning until dark, in the scrub on windy and moonlight nights, and on the hills on dark and occasional wet ones—with the right conditions a wet night is quite a productive one. Often my son was out at night, far from any habitation, either in scrub or forest, for my work seldom left me free to accompany him then, the preparation and setting of specimens keeping me in. The fact of him, quite alone, collecting at night, far from any house, without even a dog, and as easy in his mind as if in the company of others, speaks volumes of the deadly fear we entertained of the "evil-looking" blacks. The few blacks in the district are just the same good-humoured, ragged, smoking, and often decrepit-looking creatures one sees in the Atherton, Kuranda, and other well-settled districts, who hang about hoping for odd pieces of bread, meat, and tobacco, and willing to do a little work to get their stomachs filled, then go to sleep or loaf around until hungry again, but as harmless as our wives' pet fowls. This being a truthful and unembellished narrative, I must admit that we did fear these awful blacks at times, more particularly one old chap, who undoubtedly stole one of our largest *Zeuserid* chrysalides—to eat! Once or twice the chills of fear crept over me when I came across a band of black youngsters—the leader armed with a murderous-looking tomahawk—at the thought of them discovering and eating, not me or my son, but some of the *Zeuseridæ* caterpillars we had located in the bush—fine fat specimens of which they were searching for.

For some days, when collecting in a particular spot, we noticed that two Curlews, *Burhinus grallarius*, were frequently near and greatly interested in our movements. One day I attempted to find the eggs, which I supposed were not far away, but without success, so turned off in another direction, but had not gone many yards when a slight noise behind caused me to turn, and there were the birds, not more than six feet off, with wings extended, hissing and showing great anger. Whether they would have actually struck at me I cannot say. They both stood, so, supposing the young or eggs were close by, I looked a little longer, one bird keeping very close and bouncing me, moving forward or backward as I moved. Next day, having a few minutes to spare, I again went to the spot, and up came the birds, one keeping close to me as before, and angrily disputing my advance, nor was she alarmed when I pushed my net stick close to her, but just gingerly stepped a

little aside. Finally, I saw the eggs, and walked towards them, the bird slowly retreating as I advanced, yet always within six or seven feet of me : but directly I reached the eggs she, with head bent down, ran quickly away, her mate, who kept further off, joining and running with her : nor would they return, though I stooped over and touched the eggs. They quietly watching me from under a tree some fifty yards away. Next day one egg was chipped, both birds coming close up as usual. and the day after the first chick was out and the other egg chipped ; then I left the devoted birds in peace.

We had no trouble with snakes, but killed a few. A large black species with greenish abdomen was the only poisonous one we met with, unless we except a seven-inch specimen of the Brown Snake found under a log in grassy country. The slender greenish or yellowish species which frequent shrubs and trees are not worth the trouble of killing. Perhaps they should be destroyed, as they are egg-robbers and bird-murderers. No death-adders were observed, though doubtless they are present in rocky localities. A large grey iguana was seen occasionally, but lizards were generally rare. Centipedes were plentiful ; not so tarantulas and other spiders.

Altogether, the trip was an interesting and successful one, but I regretted that I was unable to spend six months there instead of three. There are drawbacks, of course : January and February are too rainy to be pleasant, and this year March must have been an unusually wet month ; it is generally referred to by residents as the worst. Mosquitoes were almost entirely absent, and for the first three summer months for years I slept without a mosquito-net. No worrying bush-flies in the daytime, but leeches, ticks, and scrub-itch are in strong force, and are excessively annoying. One big striped leech, frequenting the grass near the scrubs and along the watercourses, is extremely active and unusually gluttonous ; its bite often bleeds very freely. One quickly gets to know the nip or feel the crawl of the creature, and it can be removed before operations are properly under way. We were often surprised, after quick walks through the grass, to find how many of these disgusting things could attach themselves to our boots and clothing. Scrub-leeches were not numerous, and gave us little trouble, nor did the scrub-ticks, but a diminutive one, in places here and there in the grass of the forest, is a great nuisance. Frequently, after a few hours' collecting, we would have fifty or more attached to us, and, I must admit, the itching bites had to be violently rubbed or scratched until the pestiferous little wretches were dislodged ; off would come a fragment of cuticle too, but what matter, so long as we obtained relief ? We learnt in time where these ticks were particularly bad, and avoided such

spots with the utmost care. I have, comparatively recently, read of a nervous oologist from the south, posing as a hardened and experienced bushman, who stayed in camp for a whole day, for fear of blood-poisoning setting in from the bites of leeches and scrub-itch. The latter is annoying enough, but not so bad by far as these tiny ticks, nor does the scrub-itch cause, as reported, "torturing sores" on man, beast, or bird. No man has ever yet shot a bird (especially a Tooth-bill) suffering from scrub-itch sores. To pretend that one endures "absolute torture" from the bites of the tiny Acarid, after being in the scrub a few hours, is most amusing. However, the long bow must be frequently drawn to make up pretty stories and show what heroes have to endure. Sores, if developed through scrub-itch bites, are brought on by the person himself. Most fortunate it is that these several pests of the forest and scrub do not poison our blood, such as splinters and other foreign objects are apt to do; but a scrub-tick will kill the largest dog, or bring on strange and almost alarming symptoms in a child, as we know by actual experience. A few plain facts, such as are given in the above fifteen or twenty lines, and in other portions of these notes, are very necessary, for innocent and untravelled southerners might come to look upon our wonderful scrubs as awful places, frequented only by horrific snakes and fierce cannibalistic blacks, and therefore places to be very carefully avoided if they desire to live to a good ripe age. Again, I must not omit to mention that the Fever Fiend does not stalk through these scrubs—*i.e.*, those of Atherton, Evelyn, and other elevated parts; even down on the coast malarial fever is nowadays very rare.

To get my collections safely to Herberton, it was necessary to carry them by hand, the jolting of a buggy, no matter how carefully driven, being much too risky. We had taken in a portion previously and sent it on to Kuranda, and that remaining my son and I carried in on the morning of my departure. We left at 6 o'clock, to catch the train leaving at 9.35. The walk over the twelve miles (surveyed) was generally pleasant and interesting. The country was dry and brown when I passed through in November, but now it was covered with fresh green grass, with flowers here and there, and the notes and songs of birds added to the pleasure of the walk. The morning was bright and dewy, tall box-trees were in flower, providing various birds with their breakfast. To my surprise and delight I heard, the first time for very many years, the clear, unmistakable notes of the Bell-bird, *Oreoica cristata*, but the last note seemed slightly different from that of the bird as I have heard it in Victoria.